Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

DUBLIN CITY ARTS OFFICE

Artist Workspaces Report

Findings Report

November 2020

Turley
Strategic Communications

Contents

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Executive Summary

A baseline survey into artist workspaces, commissioned by Dublin City Council and carried out by Turley Strategic Communications, revealed an overall dissatisfaction with the existing provision of artist workspaces in Dublin both in terms of supply and quality.

The field work of the artist workspaces survey was carried out from 10 June – 02 July 2020.

The survey received 538 responses in total comprising 417 Established Artists (78%), 85 Future Users (16%), and 34 representatives from arts organisations / institutions/ funding bodies (6%).

In addition a series of workshops ran from 29 June – 03 July and invited a combination of existing artists, arts organisations and "future users" to take part. A dedicated future user workshop was held on Wednesday 15 July with students and graduates primarily from Trinity College Dublin and National College of Art and Design.

The research indicates clearly that demand for additional workspace is high with 41% of artists currently seeking workspace and while the satisfaction levels of those who rent or own their workspace are comparatively high (33% satisfied and 12% very satisfied with their workspace vs 19% unsatisfied and 8% very unsatisfied), there is clearly room for improvement in provision, features and facilities of dedicated artist workspace to better meet the needs and desires of artists and future users.

The accessibility of workspaces both in terms of physical configuration and the incorporeal context is considered merely 'poor' to 'fine' by the majority, and current workspaces are not deemed fit-for-purpose for people with disabilities or facilitating public and community's access to their workspace.

Artists enjoy the central location of current workspaces and prefer using active travel (walking / cycling) as their main mode of commuting to and from these creative spaces. These are fundamental traits that distinguish artists from other professions commuting to and from the city, and many respondents retained a desire for new workspace to be a walkable / bike-friendly distance from the city centre.

Satisfaction levels regarding the features of existing artist workspaces indicate discontent in relation to size, equipment and facilities on site, access to parking, and the physical condition. In terms of workspace facilities, storage space, equipment, meeting or common spaces and heating all received the highest levels of dissatisfaction.

As a result, the perceived deficiency in these features and facilities manifested in a desire for improvements in these areas within their ideal workspaces, as described by respondents.

Looking to the future, the requirements of artists do not appear to be indulgently elaborate. Cost aside, the most important features of artists' ideal workspace are its location, the size of the space and natural light. When asked about the facilities within their ideal workspace, artists expressed a strong desire for equipment storage, sound proofing and WiFi internet.

As articulated in the workshop series, it is apparent there is 'no one size fits all' when it comes to the ideal artist workspace and the findings reveal requirements are considerably dependent on art-form.

For example, while sound proofing was ranked one of the most desired facilities, it is primarily artists working in Festival & Events, Music, Opera and Performance who prioritise this feature. Meanwhile those with a background in Animation, Literature, Arts Administration, and Sculpture ranked WiFi internet within their wish lists.

The following document outlines suggested design principles which have emerged from the survey and from the artist workshops.

While this document has sought to be design-focussed in order to assist the creation of concepts, it should be noted that the survey revealed a number of significant themes that are not specifically design-focussed but should be considered in the design of the workspace's soft infrastructure or as a foundation for further study to support future initiatives or policy.

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1 Methodology

The field work of the artist workspaces baseline survey was carried out from 10 June – 02 July 2020.

The primary purpose of the survey was to gather qualitative and quantitative feedback across practitioners from a range of art forms, at differing points in their career development.

This will form the basis of user-led open building design principles (see Artist Workspace Analysis Report). A brief that will be refined through further consultation with the Arts and Cultural sector, and design propositions tested against these principles in the feasibility of any future development site.

Final feasibility will also be informed by site specific input from community and artist users.

The primary hypothesis set by the working group was that needs and design typologies of workspace might differ significantly between groups of practitioners and by art-form. Specifically:

- The needs of largely solitary and contained arts practices, for instance visual art, illustration, literature etc., would differ significantly from performance based (music, dance, theatre, opera, circus, performance art etc.), collaborative (film, animation), mixed media, "maker" (sculpture, craft and design) or multidisciplinary practitioners.
- To identify any significant emerging differences in practice needs of established practitioners and future users.[1]
- A tertiary consideration was to evaluate the satisfaction of existing artist workspace and the perception of its availability, affordability and desirability across Dublin.

The primary research was undertaken by the distribution of a baseline survey[2] by Dublin City Council's Arts office to hundreds of arts practitioners and sectoral organisations.

The survey was hosted on a dedicated project website **www.artistworkspaces.ie** and promoted via social media, particularly to the future user cohort.

A total of 55 questions (qualitative and quantitative) informed the baseline survey, with the range of questions presented differing by first selecting one of four respondent groups: individual artist, student, organisations / institutions/ funding bodies or other.

The survey received 538 responses in total comprising 417 Established Artists (78%), 85 Future Users (16%), and 34 representatives from arts organisations / institutions/ funding bodies (6%).

In addition a series of workshops ran from 29 June – 03 July and invited a combination of existing artists, arts organisations and future users to take part. A dedicated future user workshop was held on Wednesday 15 July with students and graduates primarily from Trinity College Dublin and National College of Art and Design.

95 people registered to take part in the workshops with 46 people joining the video conference sessions from a wide range of art-forms, backgrounds, locations across the city, and levels of professional experience.

Participants were asked to take part in the Edward De Bono "Daydream Thinking" task and whereby they were asked to mentally visualise their ideal workspace before discussing these ideal workspaces in breakout groups.

Annex 1 provides a breakdown of the outcomes of these sessions in a Visual Minutes format.

The Thematic Analysis (see Artist Workspace Analysis Report) set outs a summary of the issues and themes raised, alongside a precis of the analysis within this Finding Report and qualitative and quantitative analysis that illustrate the theme or design principle.

[1] *For the purposes of this survey a Future User was categorised as a respondent who self-identified as a Student or as an Artist with 0-5 years of experience. An established user self-identified as having 5 or more years experience.*

[2] *A copy of the survey is available online at: https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/oDDN4mPd*

2 Respondent Profile

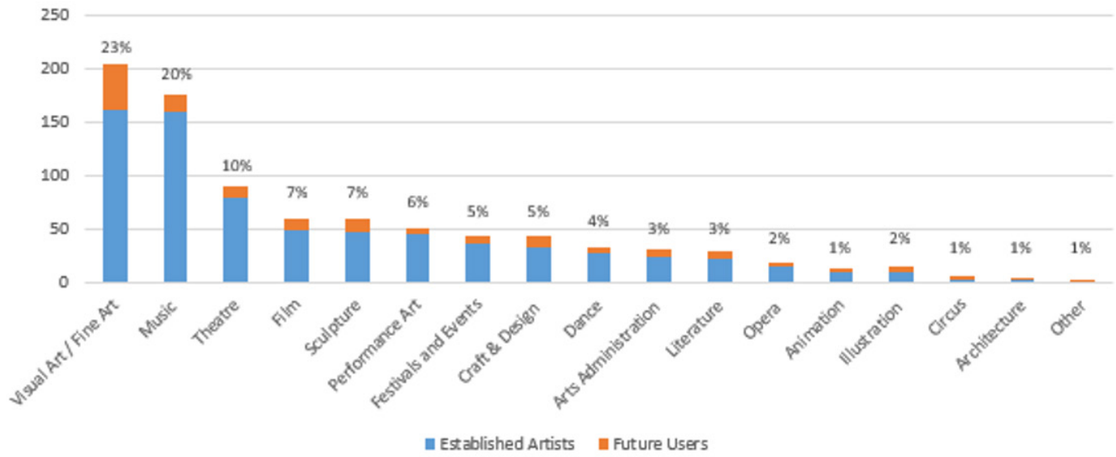

Figure 2.1. Respondent Profile

The survey was responded to by artists from a wide range of different disciplines, as defined within the Arts Act 2003, alongside the addition of Arts Administration and Festivals and Events.

The highest levels of responses generated from those with Visual Arts / Fine Art background (23%), followed by Music (20%), Theatre (10%), Film (7%) and Sculpture (7%), Performance Art (6%), Craft & Design (5%), Dance (4%), Arts Administration (3%), Literature (3%), Illustration (2%), Opera (2%).

Animation, Circus, Architecture and Other made up the remainder with less than 1% for each art form category. As such results based on these responses from art-forms with a smaller percentage of respondents may not be as reliable.

Where possible we have illustrated comparisons between art forms by weighted percentage, to ensure the views of art forms with fewer respondents are not underrepresented compared to larger art form categories (such as Visual Art and Music).

It is important to note that respondents were also allowed to select multiple disciplines with the vast majority of participants working across more than one discipline.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the breakdown of respondents by discipline and indicates the proportion of future users within each group.

The majority of Established Artists who responded have been practicing their art-form for 6-10 years (27%), followed by 16-20 years (21%) and 11-15 years (20%). Of the survey's 85 Future Users, 61% (52) were artists practicing for 5 years or less and 39% were students (33). The universities / colleges of these 33 students is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

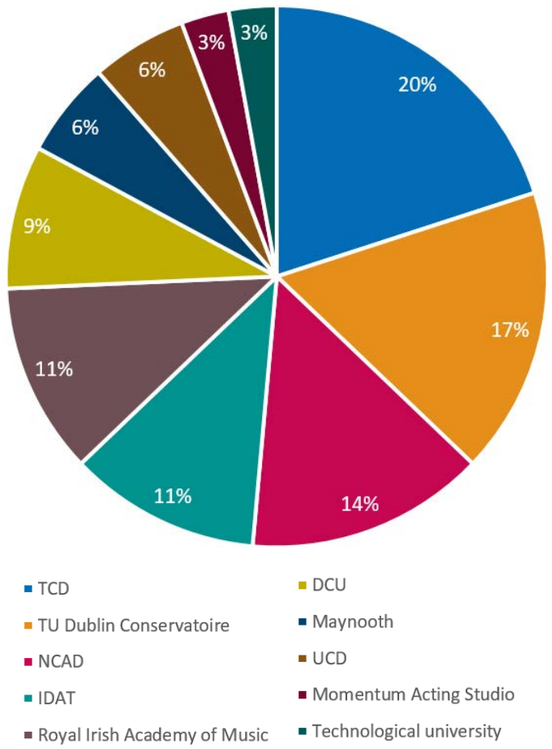

Figure 2.2 Universities or colleges student respondents are enrolled in

3 Ideal Workspace

Top 5 Features, Facilities and Services

When asked to rank the three most important features, facilities and services for workspace, unsurprisingly 'cost' (12.2%) was considered to be the most important "feature" followed by its location (8.7%), the size of the space (8.6%) and equipment storage (7.7%).

Top 5	Features (Ranked)	Weighted Percentage %
1.	Cost	12.22155
2.	Location	8.729680
3.	Size of Space	8.669476
4.	Equipment storage	7.706201
5.	Sound proofing	6.682721

Interestingly the features which respondents had been most dissatisfied with in their existing workspace (access to equipment, access to parking, physical condition) were not ranked amongst the top features of an ideal workspace.

However, when respondents were asked to describe their ideal workspace in their own words, other features were emphasised.

Top 5	Features (Ranked)	Weighted Percentage %
1.	Natural light	9.323770
2.	Kitchen facilities	6.915983
3.	Storage	6.762295
4.	Privacy	5.584016
5.	Collaboration	5.122951

Kitchen facilities (6.9%), privacy (5.5%) and a collaborative space (5.12%), displaced cost (affordability) and location from the most important features.

Figure 3.1 Word cloud of common themes emerging from descriptions of ideal workspaces

By combining the analysis of ranked features, and the weighted averages of similar features mentioned by respondents the following 50 prioritised features emerges:

Priority Features (Combined Mentions and Ranking)		Weighted Percentage %
1.	Affordability / Cost	8.108727
2.	Secure Equipment Storage	8.10515
3.	WIFI and Broadband	7.493218
4.	Natural Light	7.16038
5.	Size of Space	6.665681
6.	Kitchen and/or Communal area	6.197305
7.	Sound proofing	5.902836
8.	Location	4.36484
9.	Collaborative and Multidisciplinary Space	4.172784
10.	Out of Hours Access	4.155034
11.	Artificial Lighting	3.934232
12.	Sink / Wet area	3.911794
13.	Privacy	2.792008
14.	Exhibition Space	2.288133
15.	Broadband Internet	2.257676
16.	Open Plan / Space	1.946721
17.	Secure Bike Parking	1.645898
18.	Physical Condition	1.625527
19.	Event space	1.588115
20.	Rehearsal Space	1.536885
21.	Meeting Rooms	1.22391
22.	Ventilation	1.178279
23.	Sprung floor	1.03301
24.	Car Parking	1.02348
25.	Accessibility	0.993377

Priority Features (Combined Mentions and Ranking)		Weighted Percentage %
26.	Fabrication Equipment	0.842866
27.	Security of Building	0.782661
28.	Proximity to Public Transport	0.768443
29.	Classrooms	0.717213
30.	Lease duration	0.717213
31.	Quiet	0.717213
32.	High Ceiling	0.691598
33.	Large doors	0.665984
34.	Outdoor area	0.640369
35.	Warehouse style	0.640369
36.	Quality furniture	0.563525
37.	Flexible	0.512295
38.	Promotion and Public Awareness	0.421433
39.	Shower and Changing Facilities	0.409836
40.	Proximity to Green Space	0.281762
41.	Annual Programming	0.270921
42.	Screening Room(s)	0.240819
43.	Media lab	0.204918
44.	Disability accessible	0.179303
45.	Power Tool Access	0.179303
46.	Subsided Artist Living Space	0.179303
47.	Arts administration	0.128074
48.	Commercial Space	0.090307
49.	Purpose-built	0.076844
50.	Direct Line telephone	0.030102

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Art-form Analysis

This creates an "Art-form DNA" highlighting the difference and mutual preferred features across each art-form:

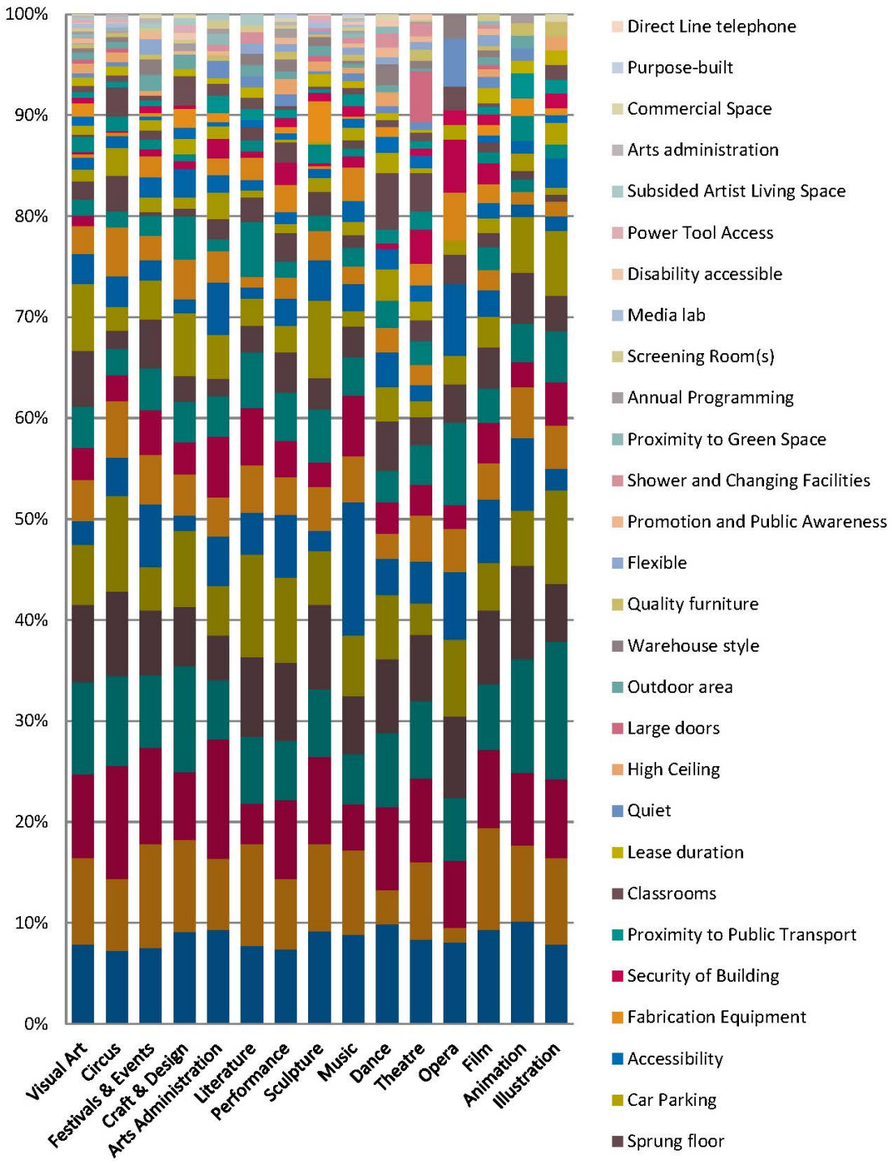

Figure 3.2 Ideal features and facilities of artist workspaces per art-form

When asked to describe or rank the features of their ideal space all artists share a number of universal facilities which emerge:

- Affordability and cost (8.1%) was almost universally the most important feature of an ideal workspace, but was emphasised by Animation (10.1%), Dance (9.8%), Film (9.4%), Arts Administration (9.3%), Sculpture (9.2%) and Craft (9.2%), suggesting these art-forms are more sensitive to cost.
- Secure storage was the second most heavily weighted feature (8.1%), referring to both communal storage for equipment and in unit/studio storage.
- Wifi / Broadband internet connectivity was the third most important feature by combined weighted average (7.5%) across all art-forms, but was given a much lower priority by both Literature (4%) and Music (4.5%).
- Natural light was mentioned by respondents most often and was the fourth most prioritised feature (7.16%) across art-forms. It was unsurprisingly more important to art-forms that require abundant natural light such as Illustration (13.6%), Animation (11.3%), Craft & Design (10.5.4%) and Visual Arts (9.2%) and statistically much less important to Music, Arts Administration, Opera, Film and Literature.
- The size or scale of the workspace units/studios were the fifth largest weighted average (6.7%), and frequently mentioned and highly ranked by Animation (9.2%), Sculpture (8.4%), Circus (8.35%) and Opera (8.1%).
- Kitchen and communal areas were strongly weighted as the sixth most common feature (6.2%) across all art-forms, and appeared to be least important to Theatre (3.1%).
- Location is also seen as critical across all art-forms (4.3%), with an emphasis on proximity to the city centre and public transport, and appeared to be least important to Dance (2.5%).
- Whilst Out of Hours Access was commonly regarded as important (4.1%) feature, 10th in priority, it curiously was very highly prized by Opera (8.1%) and less relevant compared to Circus relative to other art-forms (2.5%).[3]

The initial analysis also identified some clear and obvious art-form specific requirements.

- Sound proofing was supported across a range of art-forms and was the seventh priority overall, it unsurprisingly was prioritised most highly by Music (13.2%) almost double the average (5.9%). In contrast sound proofing was of least value to Craft and Design (1.5%), Sculpture (2.0%), Illustration (2.1%).
- Collaboration and multidisciplinary space was highly prized amongst almost all art-forms with an average weighting of (4.2%), in particular Music (6.0%), and perhaps surprisingly amongst Arts Administrators (6.0%) and Literature (5.7%). It was least valued by Sculpture (2.4%) and Opera (2.4%).
- Artificial lighting was a key requirement (3.9%) amongst art-form such as Visual Arts (5.6%), Dance (4.9%), Festivals and Events (4.8%) and Film (4.1%) were stage lighting, dark room, and other controlled lighting was required. Curiously however it was not significantly prioritised by Theatre (2.7%).
- Sinks / wet areas (3.9%) were a distinctly important feature for Sculpture (7.6%), Visual Arts (6.7%), Illustration (6.4%) and Craft & Design (6.2%).

By removing common features such as cost, location, size of space, Wifi and equipment torage outlined above, a more specific and differentiated Art-form 'DNA' begins to emerge (Figure 3.3)[4]. Likewise due to small sample sizes from Circus, Opera, Architecture, Animation and Illustration have been removed from further analysis. Once more we begin to see some art-form specific requirements emerge:

- Privacy is mostly strongly guarded by Arts Administrators (5.2%) and Sculptors (3.9%) against a weighted average across all art-forms (2.8%).
- Exhibition space seems to be disproportionately supported by Craft and Design (3.9%) against the weighted average (2.7%) across all art-forms, it is also well supported by Arts Administrators (3.2%), Sculpture (2.9%) and Visual Arts (2.8%).
- Open plan space is favoured more strongly by Craft and Design (2.1%), Dance (1.4%) and Theatre (1.19%) than the average across all art-forms (1.0%), albeit based on smaller respondent numbers within these categories.
- Event Space is most strongly supported by Festivals and Events, and Crafts & Design
- Rehearsal Space most strongly referenced and ranked by Performance Art and Music followed by Festivals and Theatre
- Meeting rooms are mostly required by Theatre, Performance Art, Film and Arts Administration.
- A sprung floor is only a significant requirement for Dance and Theatre.
- Good ventilation is most strongly prioritised by Sculpture, Theatre and somewhat by Visual Artists.
- Classroom space was a specific need almost exclusively for Craft and Design, fabrication space for Sculpture, likewise large loading doors (stage doors) were referenced only by Theatre.

[3] *Please note this is likely to be due to the small sample size from respondents from Circus. Likewise due to small sample sizes from Circus, Opera, Architecture, Animation and Illustration have been removed from further analysis..*

[4] *Circus, Opera, Architecture, Animation and Illustration excluded due to small sample or zero sample sizes, but any response has been included in any cited mean weighted averages further in this report, and relevant comments have been included in the Thematic Analysis.*

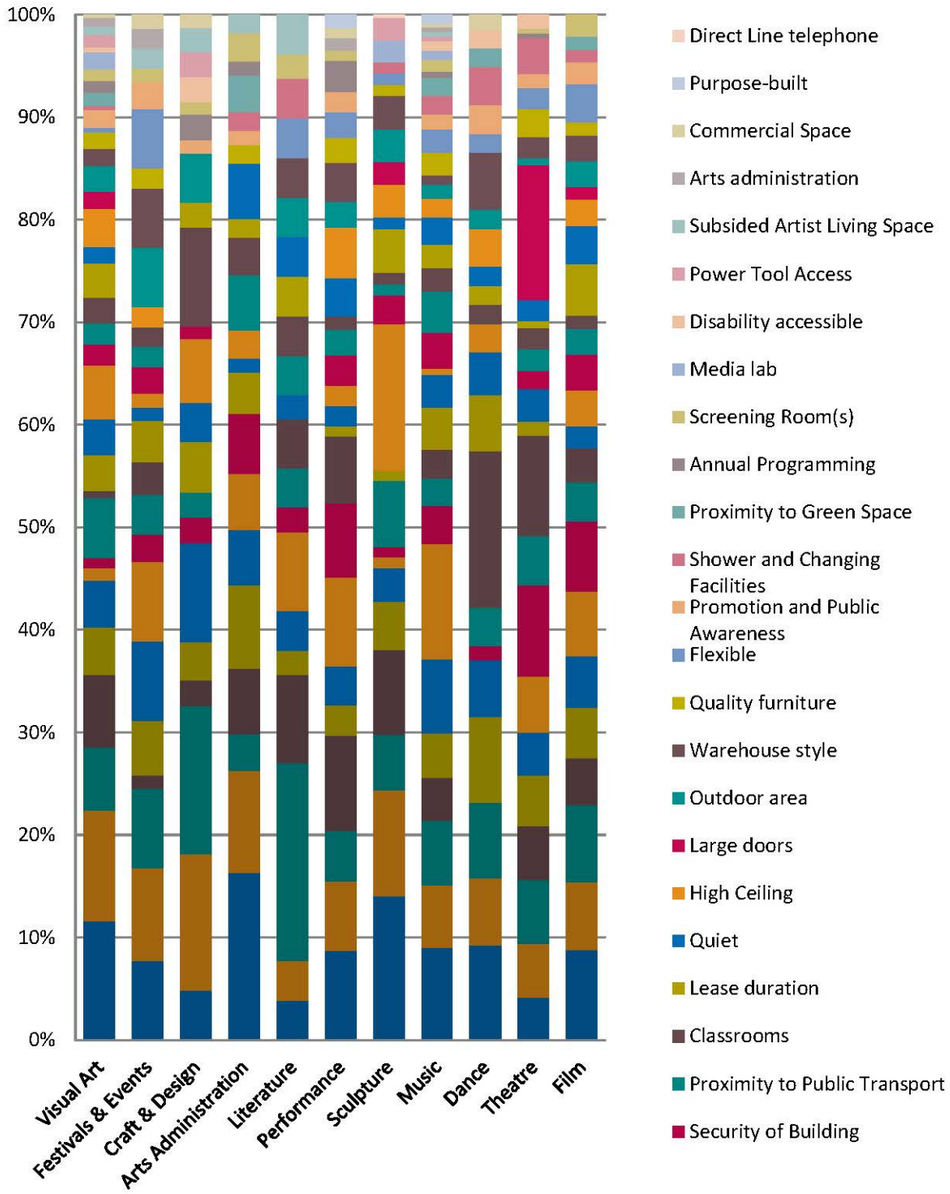

Figure 3.3 Further refined "Art-form DNA"

To further differentiate specific requirements from broader needs across art-forms, respondents were asked to describe the most important aspects of their work environment.[5]

- As expected lighting, affordability, building access, location, storage, and size featured prominently, and were excluded from this analysis. [6]
- Two additional items were specifically raised; open Space (13.23%) and heating (12.97%).
- Open space (12.23%) was most significantly endorsed by Film (18.5%), Sculpture (17.5%), Visual Art (15.5%), and Performance Art (13.6%).
- Heating was not previously with the top 50 features, but was deemed an important aspect of the surrounding environment across all art-forms (12.9%).

By removing common responses such as those listed above some further features and trends were highlighted

- Privacy and quiet also featured strongly (9.5% and 8.5% respectively) as important aspects of the work environment across all art-forms.
- Collaboration which had a weighted average of 4.45% across all art-forms and was most strongly endorsed by Visual Artists (8.3%) and Arts Administrators (8.7%).
- Flexibility (1.9%) was a feature most commonly associated with Animation (4.3%), Music (3.5%) and Film (3.1%).
- Acoustic Design (1.5%) and Sound proofing were most commonly associated with Music.

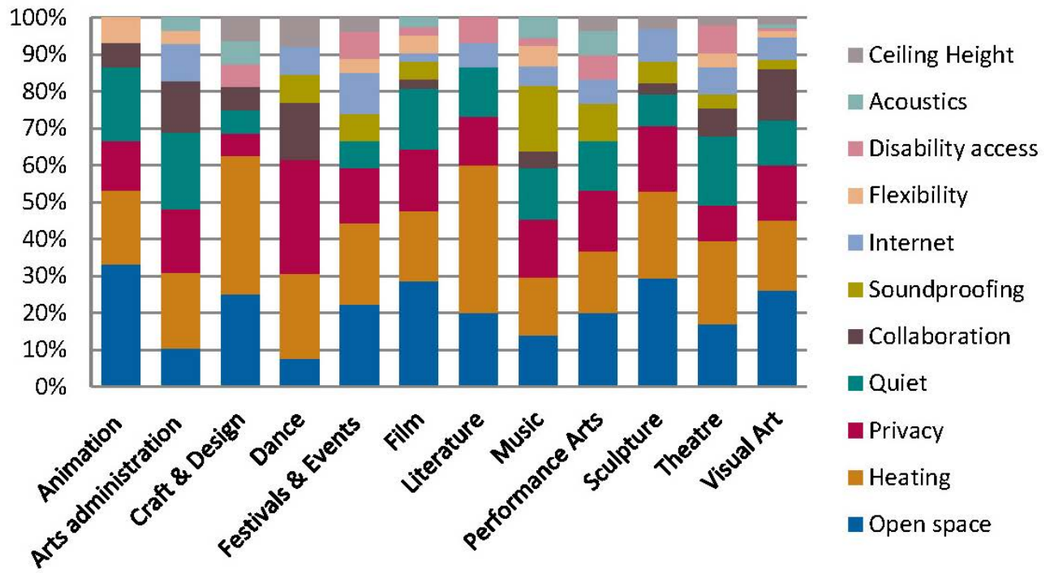

Figure 3.4 - The Most Important Aspect of Your Work Environment

[5] *Circus, Illustration and Opera were excluded as they had too few respondents to this query to be statistically valid.*

[6] *Comments included in response to these themes are included in the Thematic Analysis above.*

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When asked if respondents could design a workspace for the future, what services, facilities or features would they include that are not currently available in the city, they spoke to a number of distinctive characteristics dependent on the respondents art-form:

- Exhibition space (23.9%) of weighted average of all responses was important for Performance Art (29.6%), Music (27.7%), Illustration (27.3%), Festivals & Events (27.3%) but interestingly whilst still referenced by Visual Artists (23.5%) it was below the weighted average of all art-forms.
- Larger space (11.7%) on the other hand continued to be the key missing characteristic in the city for Visual Arts (17.3%) and Arts Administration (14.3%).
- Theatre (17.1%) was by far the art-form most urgently seeking out missing flexible space (6.9%).
- Affordability remained the largest issue to be resolved across art-forms (26.6%), and particularly so for Film (30.4%), Illustration (36.4%) and Theatre (31.4%)[7].

Future Users vs Established Artists

Whilst generally Future Users and Established Artists described a similar set of priorities for their **ideal workspace**, some divergent trends did emerge when describing their ideal workspace.

- 6.3% of Established Artists mentioned sound proofing compared to just 2% of Future Users
- 3.8% of Established Artists mentioned rehearsal space compared to just 2.5% of Future Users
- Future Users put a greater emphasis on the need for storage, 8.6% compared to just 5.9% of Established Artists
- Interestingly, Established Artists placed a greater emphasis on Wifi, 4.8% mentioned it in contrast to just 2.2% of Future Users

When asked to describe the most important aspects of their work environment, respondents generally highlighted the need for good lighting (15.7% of all respondents), heating (9.0%), and improved sizes of their unit (8.8%). However:

- Future Users placed a much greater emphasis on open space, with 16.4% of respondents mentioning it, making it the second most important aspect after lighting. In contrast just 8.5% of Established Artists referenced open space.

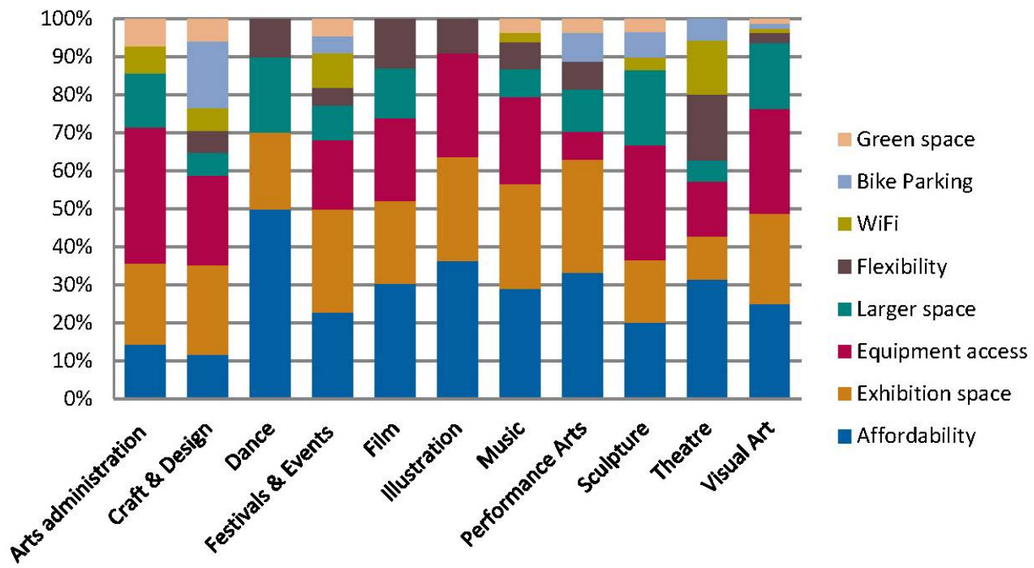

Figure 3.5 Service, facilities or features not currently available in Dublin

[7] *Note these results are based on a smaller sample size than previous analysis in the report regarding affordability*

- All hours access was referenced more frequently by Established Artists, 8.5% in contrast to just 4.1% of Future Users.
- Established Artists were much more concerned about ensuring they had private space with 6.4% referring to it as an important aspect, in contrast to just 1.3% of Future Users.
- The storage of valuables and equipment was much more important to Future Users with 8.2% making reference to it, compared to just 4.4% of Established Artists.

When asked what services, facilities or features, not currently available across the city they would like to see:

- Access to equipment (e.g. communal, shared or hire access to specialist ICT, fabrication, software or technical equipment) was the most referenced feature amongst Future Users (16%).
- In contrast affordable space continued to be an important feature of workspace, not currently available across the city, for 23.9% of Established Artists.
- Established Users also emphasised the need for 'exhibition space' (18.6%) whereas Future Users seemed to prioritise larger 'unit' space (16%).

Whilst the individual references were too few to make a direct comparative analysis other key features not currently available included, access to green space, bike parking and a media lab.

Current vs Ideal Space

When it comes to the type of space that artists want to work in compared to their existing workspace, there was a noticeable greater demand for individual group space, performance / exhibit space, and maker / fabrication space.

Figure 3.6 illustrates this difference between current workspace typologies and their ideal workspace.

Of the responses to this question, 20% indicated their ideal workspace would comprise an individual group space (an individual space within a larger workspace).

This echoes the previous trend that the majority of artists work collaboratively either all or part of the time, but a large cohort (primarily visual artists) require individualised space.

A noticeable demand for performance / exhibit space (11%) aligns with dissatisfaction levels expressed earlier in our finding of this report, which illustrate that a majority of respondents (54%) considered their workspace as offering 'poor' accessibility for exhibiting, performing or commercialising artist's work.

The small but noticeable increase in desire for workshop (7%) and maker / fabrication space (5%) also speak to an aforementioned dissatisfaction in the provision of equipment in current workspaces.

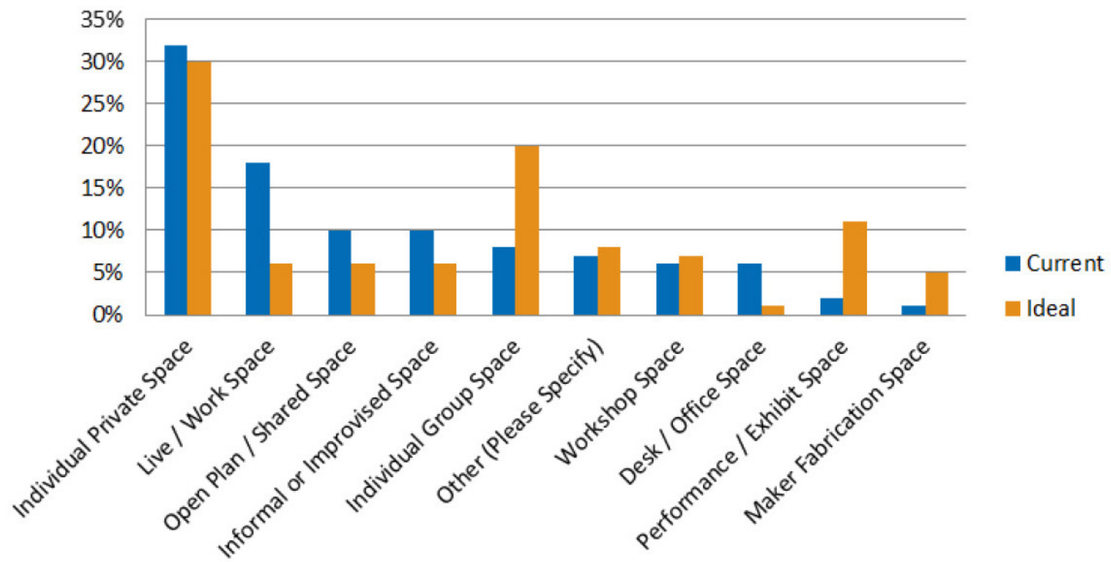

Figure 3.6 Ideal artist workspace typologies

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4 Workspace Demand

Demand for workspace appears to be a significant issue for artists at all stages of their career and the results indicate there is a very strong demand for additional artist workspace in Dublin.

Of the 394 Artists who responded to their current workspace status, 41% are "seeking workspace" with no alternatives, 28% are "renting workspace", 18% "own their workspace" and 10% are "working from home".

Of the 394 Artists who responded to the survey, 329 registered with Dublin City Council for further information on new or available workspaces, suggesting that amongst even those with current workspace – such as at home, there is a significant unmet demand.

The figures indicate a significant need for workspace across artists of all levels of experience. With artists seeking workspace largest by number amongst those practicing 6-10 years, and was highest by weighted percentage amongst those practicing between 16-20 years.

On average c.44% of artists between 0-20 years of experience are currently seeking workspace. Amongst artists with 20+ years of experience this figure dropped to a still significant c.29%, with higher numbers of artists within these groups owning their workspace compared to those with less experience.

Interestingly, artists with just 0-5 years of experience ranked amongst the highest of those who claimed to own their workspace (18%), disproportionally larger than the remainder of artists with less than 20 years of experience.

Notably those practicing 11-15 years had the largest percentage of respondents awarded workspace residency (5.4%), and a sizeable portion of this group also working from home (10.8%).

This trend of artists mostly seeking workspace is widespread across all disciplines however the greatest need appears to be widespread across platforms (see Figure 4.2).

The greatest current demand for workspace was highest amongst respondents from Opera, Dance, Illustration, Literature and Film backgrounds.

However, amongst art-forms with smaller numbers of respondents such as Circus, Architecture and Animation, these results may not be as reliable, and attention should be given to qualitative concerns regarding access to workspace considered elsewhere in this report.

Unsurprisingly many respondents are currently working from home - which may also be an impact of the Covid-19 circumstances during which the survey was completed.

Working from home was highest amongst art forms such as Architecture, Arts Administration, Literature and Performance Art. An initial hypothesis suggests these art-forms require less specialist workspace and office-style facilities i.e. desk, quiet surroundings, kitchen facilities and so on.

As the research was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic "lockdown" it is not known whether the relatively large proportion of artists working from home is a long-term or intermediate status.

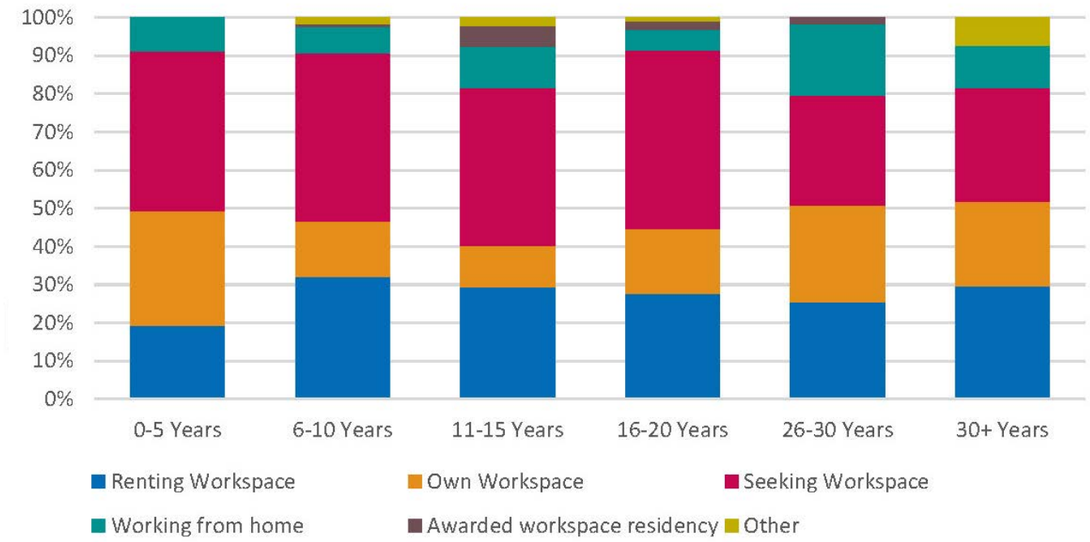

Figure 4.1 Access to workspace and no. years practicing art form

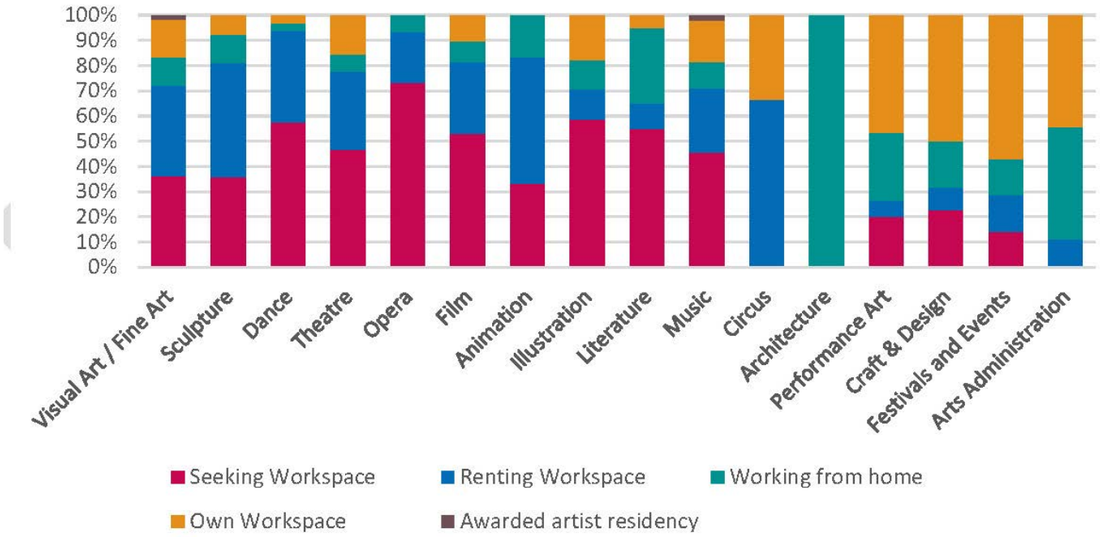

Figure 4.2 Workspace tenure and art form

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5 Workspace Typologies

45% of artists tend to work alone in their practice and this is reflective in the typologies of current workspaces (Figure 5.1), and interestingly as similar percentage of artists (43.75%) claimed their current workspace was homebased.

More than half of respondents (55%) either work primarily with others (32%) or undertake a combination of both collaborative and lone practice (23%).

Individual private space was the most popular current workspace setting (32%), followed by live / work space (18%).

Conversely open plan / shared space (10%) and individual group space (8%) were not as common despite high levels of collaborative practice amongst respondents.

This disparity between most artists working in a private setting and the majority of the artists confirming they work collaboratively for at least a portion of their practice, may contribute to a widespread qualitative perception that current provision may not meet the needs of those seeking working space with adequate provision for collaboration.

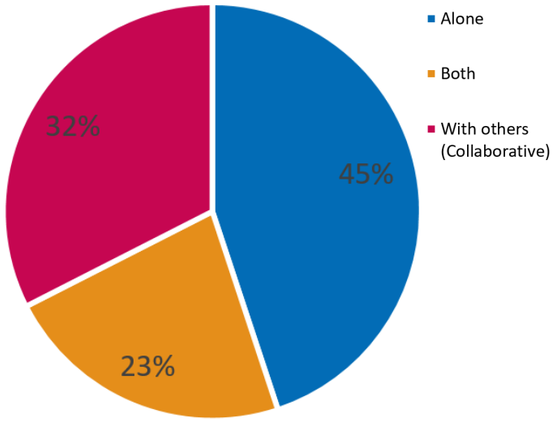

Figure 5.1 Colloboration vs lone practioners

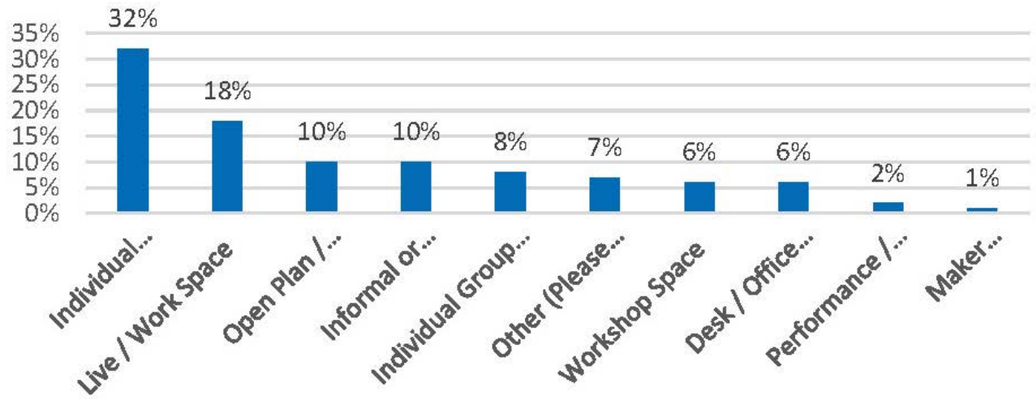

Figure 5.2 Workspace typologies

6 Perception of Artist Workspace

Overall, a majority of respondents 89% (182), Strongly Disagree (54%) or Disagree (33%), believe "there is currently insufficient available workspace in Dublin", with similar views between Future Users and Established Artists.

There is also a consensus amongst artists that workspace is considered generally unaffordable, workspace provision and affordability were the single largest issues raised in comments within the survey.

More than half of all artists surveyed Strongly Disagreed (51%) or Disagreed (34%) that "Artist Workspace in Dublin is affordable". An even larger percentage of Future Users disagreed (with this statement than Established Artists (Figure 6.2).

Likewise a majority of Established Artists (71%) do not believe that "artist workspace currently meet the needs of existing artists" (43% Strongly Disagree and 28% Disagree).

When Established Artists were asked if the needs of emerging artists were sufficiently met the levels of disagreement were even stronger (Strongly Disagree 53% and Disagree 32%), suggesting a sector wide concern (85%) for the provision of less experienced practitioners.

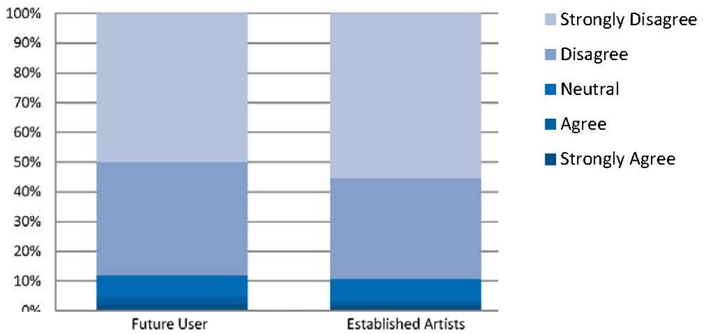

Figure 6.1 There is currently insufficient available workspace in Dublin

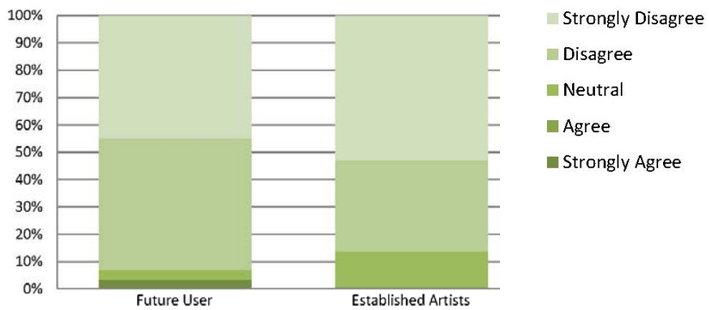

Figure 6.2. Artist Workspace in Dublin is Affordable

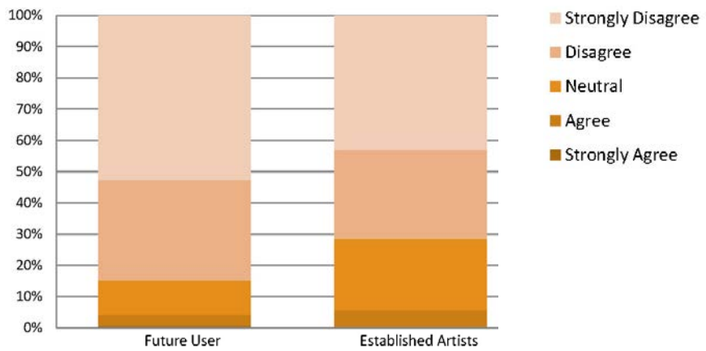

Figure 6.3 Artist Workspace meets the needs of emerging / established artists


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7 User Assessment of Current Workspaces

Security of Tenure

The availability of secure rental tenures emerged as a top issue for respondents both in the survey and a significant issue of concern during the workshops.

The majority of artists' access to their current workspace is not guaranteed over five years (69%), with just 25% of respondents (219) claiming a tenancy of 5+ years.

Meanwhile, across all respondents, the average duration of residence within their current workspace was just 36.34 months or approximately 3 years.

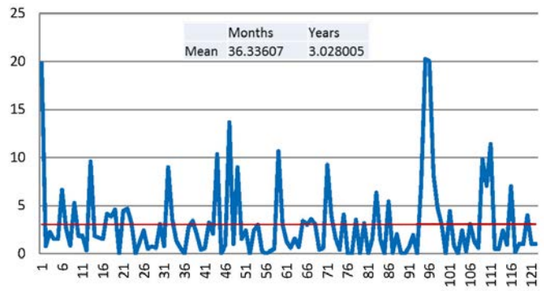


Figure 7.1 Duration of residence in current workspace

Location

Artists responding to the survey tend to live in close proximity to their workspace, with the average distance between artist workspace and home being just 3.77km. A mode of 0km likely indicates that a large percentage of respondents work from home.

Importantly, the mode also indicates that the largest group of respondent's workspace is currently located in the city centre,with the average distance to the city centre just 3.93km.

Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the mean, mode and median distances between artists and their homes, Dublin city centre, a public art centre, public transport halts, and universities / colleges.

	Mean	Mode	Median
Kilometres from City Centre	3.93km	0km	5km
Kilometres to nearest University / College	3.70km	1km	12km
Kilometres from Public Art Centre	3.54km	1km/2km	12km
Kilometres from where you live	3.77km	0km	14km
Kilometres from Public Transport	1.50km	1km	4km

Table 1: Distance between artist workspace and places of relevance

With public transport on average just 1.5km from current workspaces, and just 1km for a large proportion of respondents, it is unsurprising that active transport modes such as walking (30%) and cycling (22%) make up the majority of commuting behaviours.

However it contrasts significantly with Central Statistical Office data from 2016 that illustrates the just 13.2% of Dublin commuters travelled on foot, and less than 7.6% by bicycle.[8]

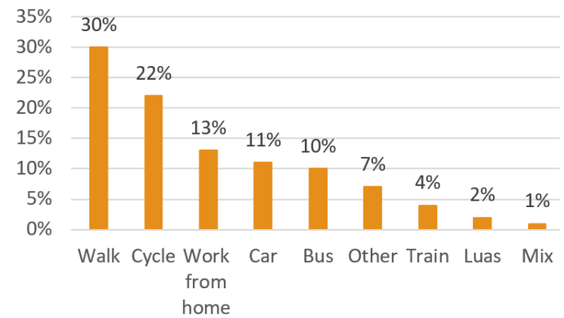
Likewise car use amongst respondents was just 11%, in contrast to an average of 44.6% when compared to the existing census data.

The commuting behaviours of artists indicate a relatively low level of public transport usage in comparison to other sustainable travel, with bus use amongst respondents measured at 10%, in contrast to 13.6% amongst Dublin commuters, and Train and Luas 6% of respondents compared to 7.6% of Dublin commuters on average.

[8] *https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/p6mtw/*

Car use was less than a quarter of the average Dublin commuter (44.6%), with just 11% of respondents regularly travelling to their workspace by car.

Figure 7.2 below shows the most popular modes of transport.



The majority of artists are Very Satisfied (41%) or Satisfied (37%) with their workspace's location, and Very Satisfied (46%) or Satisfied (28%) with their workspace's access to public / active transport.

Respondent's ideal distance between their workspace and relative amenities such as public transport halts, public art centres, universities / colleges, city centre, and where they live remains on trend with the existing distances of their current workspaces.

Respondents "ideal workspace" would preferably be situated no more than 1km from public transport, and a maximum of 5km from all other listed amenities (Figure 7.3).

This emphasises the need for new workspace to be developed within 5km of the city centre, with perhaps up to three times the requirement for bike storage as other building uses, and a similar additional provision of shower, cloak and washroom facilities to meet this use of public and active transport modes.

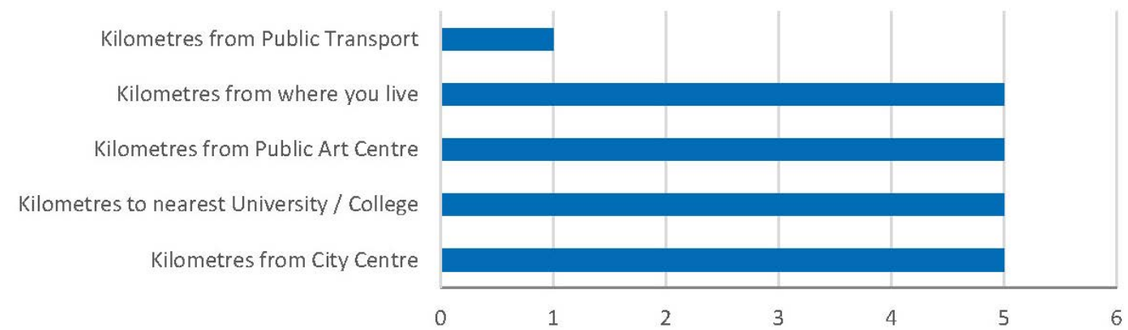


Figure 7.3 Ideal distances

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Cost

Overall artists expect to pay more for their desired workspace than they currently do. When asked how much respondents currently pay per calendar month for their workspace the average amount spent was €250.00, with a median spend of €200.00, and the most frequent rental charge is €389.93.

The most expensive amount spent was €1,700, and 23.5% of respondents appear to be paying €500 per month or more for their workspace.

Comparing these current rental fees with how much artists expect to pay for their desired workspace, there is an acknowledgement that better standard of workspace will require a larger rent. For instance, artists would expect to pay €305 (on average), a significant increase from the average current rent of €250.00.

Figure 7.4 illustrates the difference between existing and expected rent levels for artist workspace.

Whilst the source of income was not explored in great details, the survey did reveal that only 12% of artists receive public funding for their workspace.

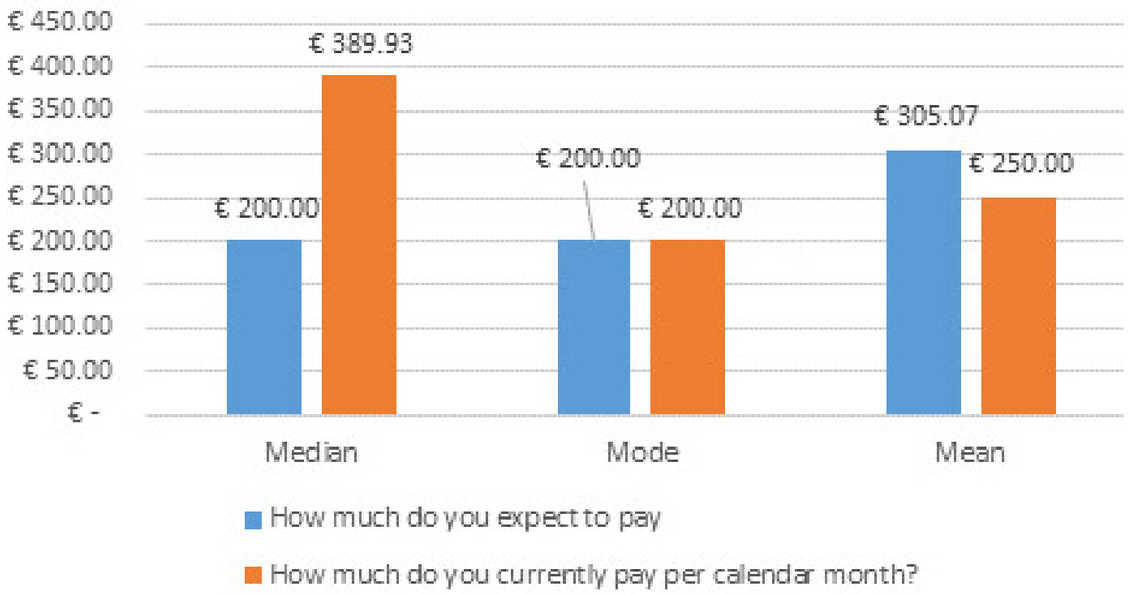

Figure 7.4 Comparison between current rent payment and expected rent payment for workspace

Access to premises

Assessing the current physical access to their workspace, most respondents were relatively positive. Most artists report having access to their workspace premises 7 days a week (85%), with 78% able to access their space 24 hours a day (Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6).

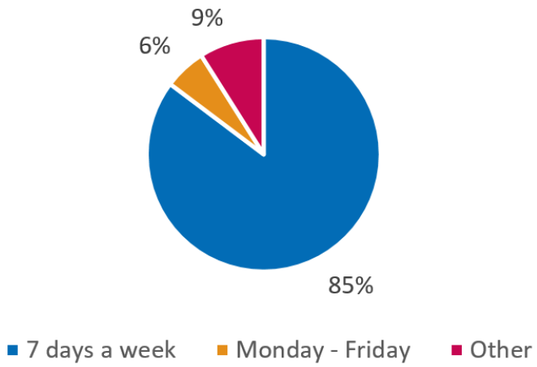

Figure 7.5 Weekly and daily access to artist workspace premises

Scale of workspace

In terms of the physical size of the workspaces artists rent or own, most workspaces are less than 200 sq ft (64%), with the second most common size 200-300 sq ft (22%). 88% of workspaces are less than 300 sq ft.

The highest level of dissatisfaction in workspace "features" were recorded in relation to size (42%), i.e. unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, and has been further examined in our analysis.

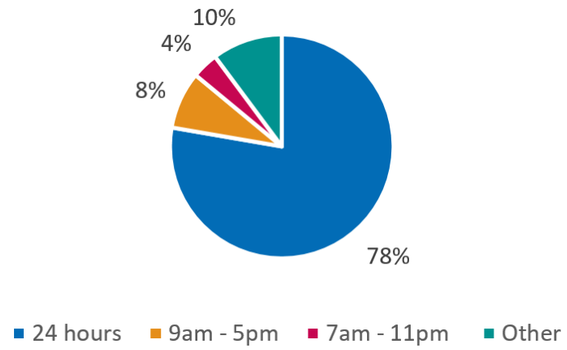

Figure 7.6 Hours of access to artist workspace premises

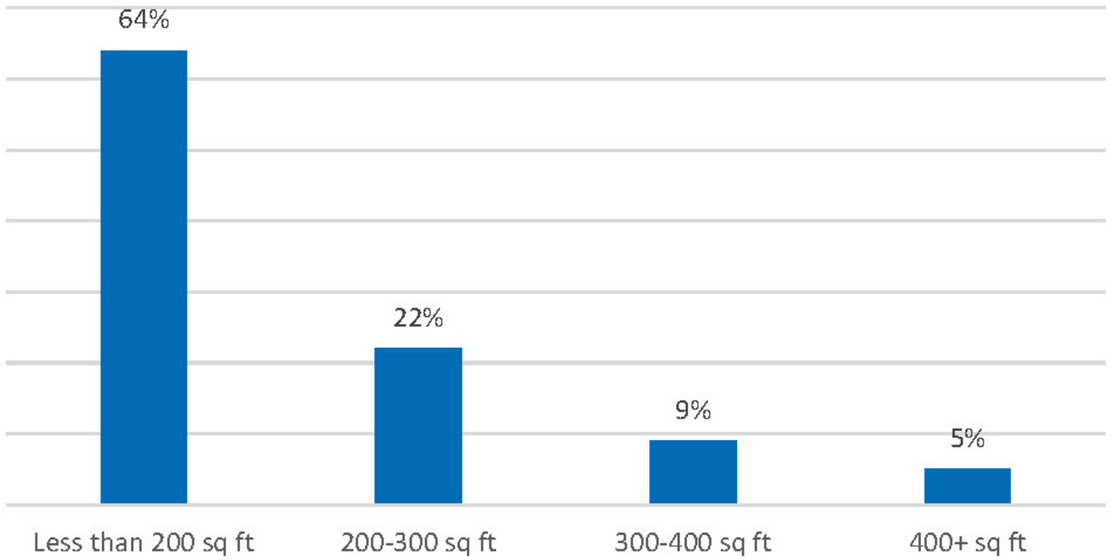

Figure 7.7 Size of artist workspaces in Dublin

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8 Satisfaction of Existing Artist Workspace

Overall satisfaction levels within existing workspace appear positive with 33% Satisfied and 12% Very Satisfied with their workspace.

Comparatively, 19% are Unsatisfied with their workspace and 8% are Very Unsatisfied. 28% appear to be neutral in their satisfaction of their workspace.

Looking specifically at the management of their workspaces, artists appear to be primarily either Very Satisfied (27%) or Satisfied (23%) with the management in place compared to those Unsatisfied (10%) or Very Unsatisfied (6%).

34% were neutral in their satisfaction of the management of their workspace.

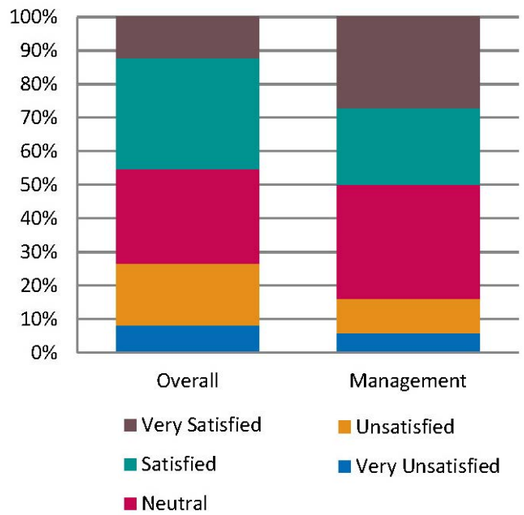

Figure 8.1 Satisfaction levels of artists regarding their general workspace and the management of their workspace

Accessibility

Accessibility within their artist workspace was largely considered 'Poor' to 'Fair' across different accessibility contexts. Figure 8.1 illustrates how accessible artists perceive their workspaces to be.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) consider their workspace to have poor disability access compared to those who perceive their workspace to have Good (16%) and Excellent (9%) access for people with disabilities.

A clear majority of artists consider access to collaboration with other art-forms to be Poor (40%) to Fair (16%) in their workspace, compared to 17% and 14% who have experienced Good or Excellent access respectfully.

Accessibility for public and community's access was also commonly ranked as Poor (44%) or Fair (8%). Likewise workspaces were broadly considered to offer Poor accessibility for exhibiting, performing or commercialising the work of artists (54%), with 12% deeming this accessibility as Fair.

Accessibility for Loading, Deliveries and Collection received the highest level of favourable responses, with many perceiving their workspace as offering Good (20%) or Excellent (12%) accessibility (20%) in this regard.

Comparatively fewer (31%) ranked their workspace as offering Poor Loading, Delivery and Collection access. Nearly a fifth perceived it as either Fair (19%) or were Neutral (18%).

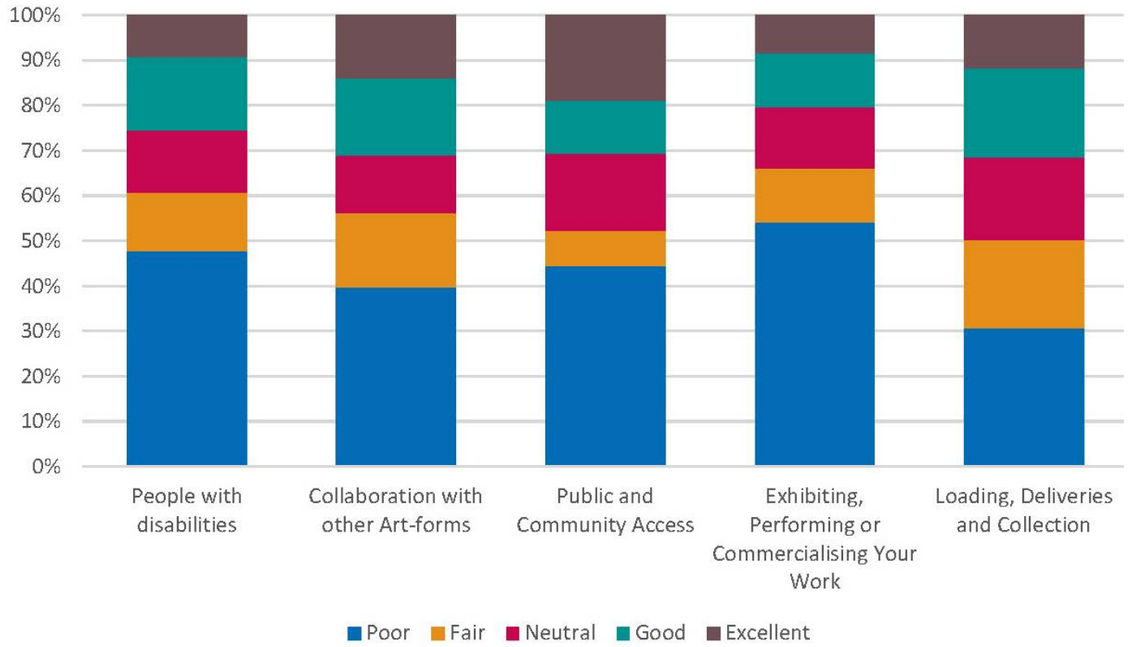

Figure 8.2 Perceived accessibility of current artist workspace

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Features

In terms of the features of their current workspace, the highest levels of satisfaction were expressed towards the location, security and their workspace's access to public transport / active transport.

The majority of artists are Very Satisfied (31%) or Satisfied (28%) with the security of their workspace, albeit it features as a desirable feature of future workspace development.

Conversely the highest levels of dissatisfaction were felt in relation to the size, equipment and on site facilities, access to parking, and the physical condition.

Nearly half of respondents were Unsatisfied (30%) or Very Unsatisfied (12%) with the size of their workspace. At a similar level, 28% were Unsatisfied and 14% Very unsatisfied with the physical condition of their workspace.

Figure 8.3 outlines varying levels of satisfaction towards workspace features.

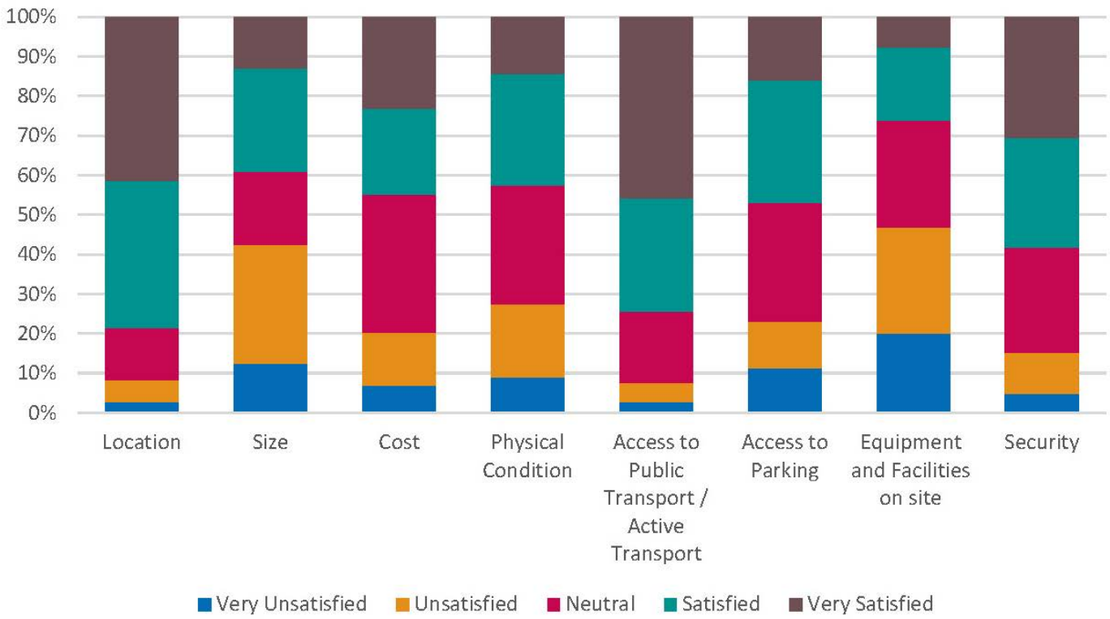

Figure 8.3 Satisfaction of current workspace features

Facilities

Storage space, equipment, meeting or common spaces and heating all received the highest levels of dissatisfaction. Half of artists are Unsatisfied (26%) or Very Unsatisfied (24%) with the storage space available in their workspace. Meanwhile equipment continues to be an issue for artists, with the majority Unsatisfied (22%) or Very Unsatisfied (20%) with this facility.

Satisfaction levels were highest for workspace facilities such as artificial lighting, ceiling height, natural lighting, internet and communal or kitchen spaces.

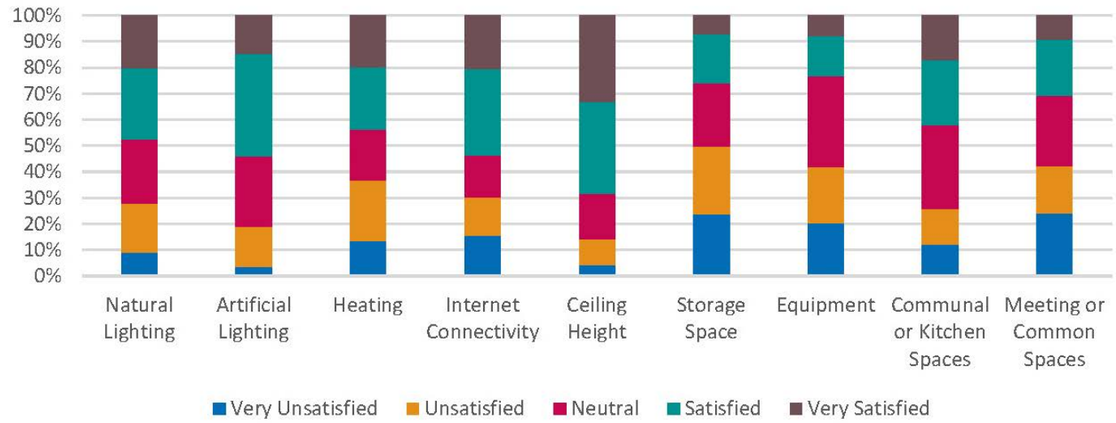

Figure 8.4 Satisfaction of current workspace facilities

Workspace Services

When considering the soft infrastructure of artists workspaces i.e. services included as part of the rental or ownership fees, there is widespread dissatisfaction.

However, it the most significant dissatisfaction was with regard to onsite commercial opportunities, support services (such as training or professional development), and services that promote collaboration with other art-forms.

Satisfaction appears to be highest in relation to annual programming (events, group shows etc.) offered by their workspace (16% Very Satisfied and 14% Satisfied).

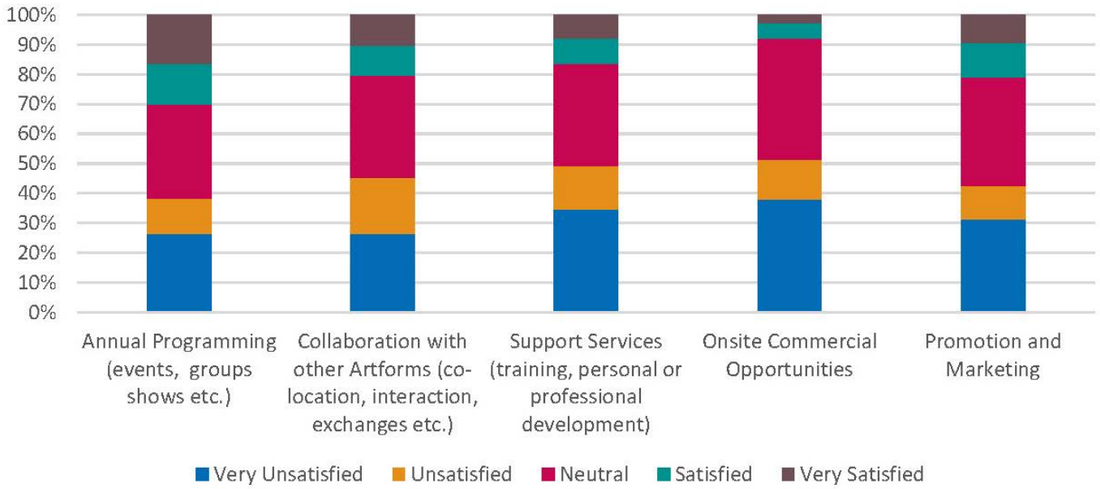

Figure 8.5 Satisfaction of current workspace services

Workspaces and the Community

In addition to providing a space for artists to work in, many workspaces in Dublin currently play another role engaging the public, local community, schools, students or other art-form groups.

When asked "what role, if any, does your workspace play in engaging the public, local community, schools, students or other groups in your art-form?" Outreach programmes were cited in comments as the most popular peripheral initiative of respondent's workspaces (39%), followed by hosting exhibitions (20%), facilitating artist collaborations (13%) and workshops (13%).

Figure 8.6 below presents the diverse set of roles artist workspaces perform in addition to their core function mentioned by respondents.

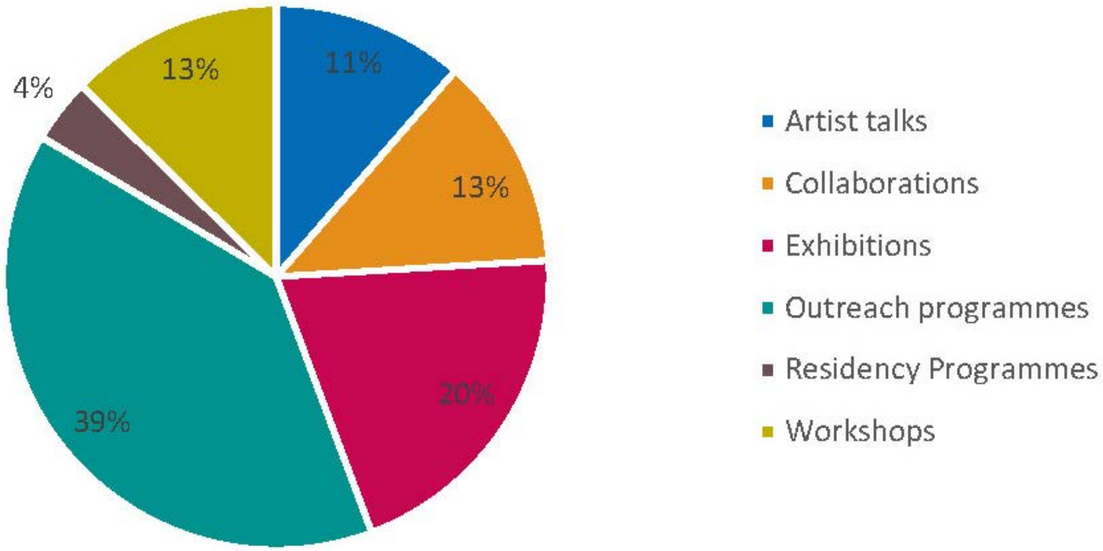

Figure 8.6 Thematic analysis of workspace in the community

Workspaces Technology and Equipment

Technology and the provision of equipment was viewed as extremely important. When asked specifically about the role of technology, 55 comments were made highlighting the provision of technical equipment as a "necessary consideration in Dublin City Council's development of workspace for artists".

The provision of equipment was recognised as an important catalyst for the arts to develop and fundamentally for the fabrication of many modern art forms. Issues raised included secure access to communal specialist equipment, secure storage for personal equipment and greater facilitation of sharing and sourcing tools and equipment amongst peers or fellow tenants.

The quality of internet was the second most popular technological theme referenced with 43 comments. Providing "excellent internet" was viewed as imperative for across the multiple stages of art-form creation, from "documentation, application, to final presentation".

The use of the internet as a means for online networking, hosting of portfolios, and digitisation and archiving was also referenced as crucial outcomes of workspace internet.

Different equipment requirements were cited by different disciplines. 36 comments were received in relation to Audio Equipment such as AV, recording, microphones, and even some communal instruments. Meanwhile other visual equipment was listed such as "projectors, screens, lighting" and "arduino, VR/AR, motion tracking/capture".

Additionally artists were also interested in the use of technology for screening, printing, and marketing and as an essential element of the arts following Covid-19.

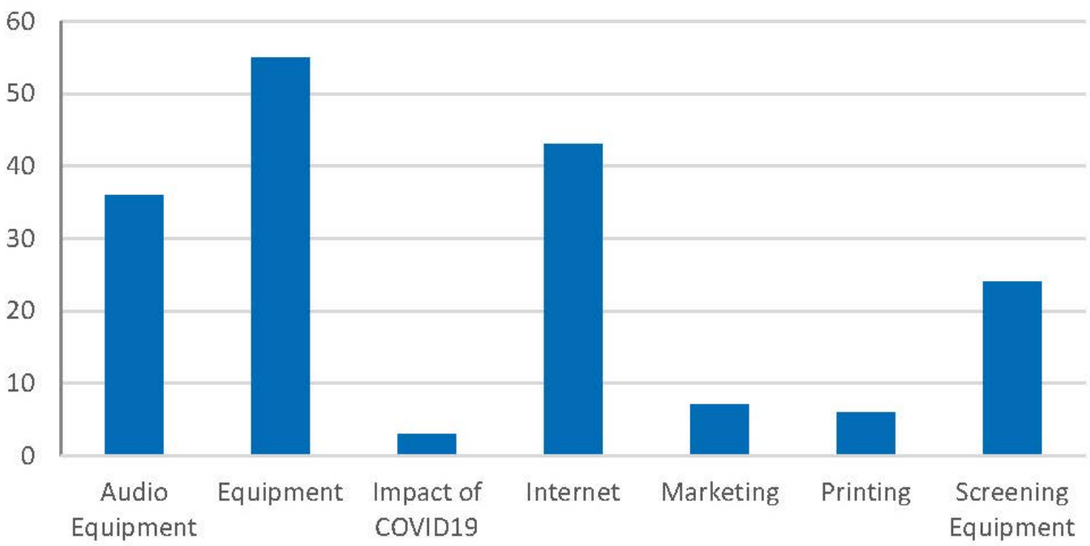

Figure 8.7 facilitating the use of workspace technology and equipment

Workspace promotion, exhibiting and commercialisation

When asked what role, if any, their workspace played "in the promotion, exhibiting or commercialisation of your work" 51 % of respondents emphasised exhibition space, including the opportunity to take part in Group / Member showcases, as a primary benefit of their workspace or desired space, opportunities available at their workspace.

Others referenced the collaboration with other artists / arts organisations fostered by their workspace (14%). Examples of collaborative initiatives mentioned included the organisation of meet-ups, scheduled curator visits, and participation in initiatives such as Culture Night.

Cross-promotion was viewed as a valuable offering from their workspace (22%), with some workspaces promoting artists through "programming, performance hire services, youth classes and outreach programmes".

Meanwhile other workspaces seek to cross-promote by hosting open studios, referencing artists on their website and allowing artists to use the workspace for the creation of their own promotional content. Relatedly some respondents mentioned the cross-promotion available via the workspaces' social media channels (12%).


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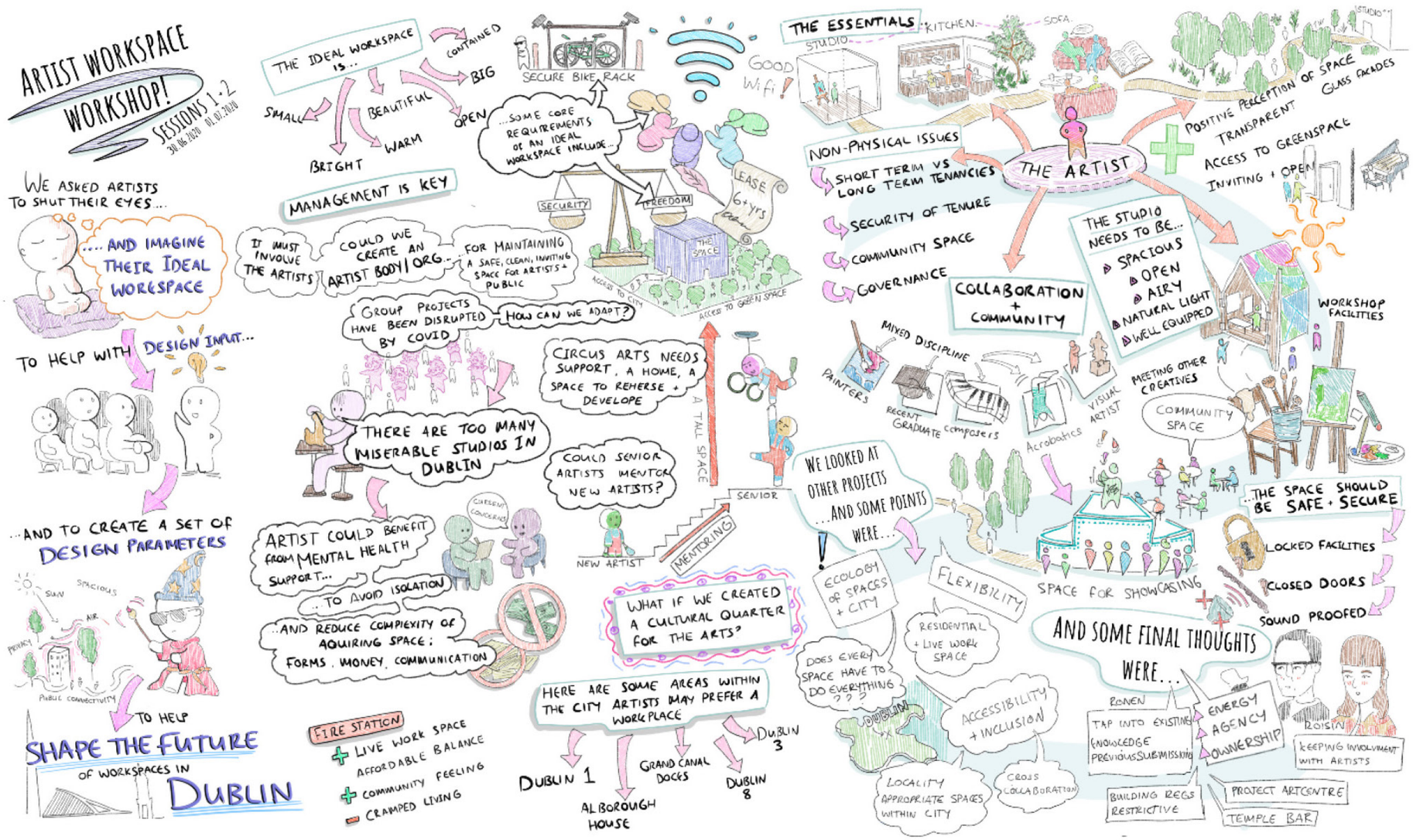
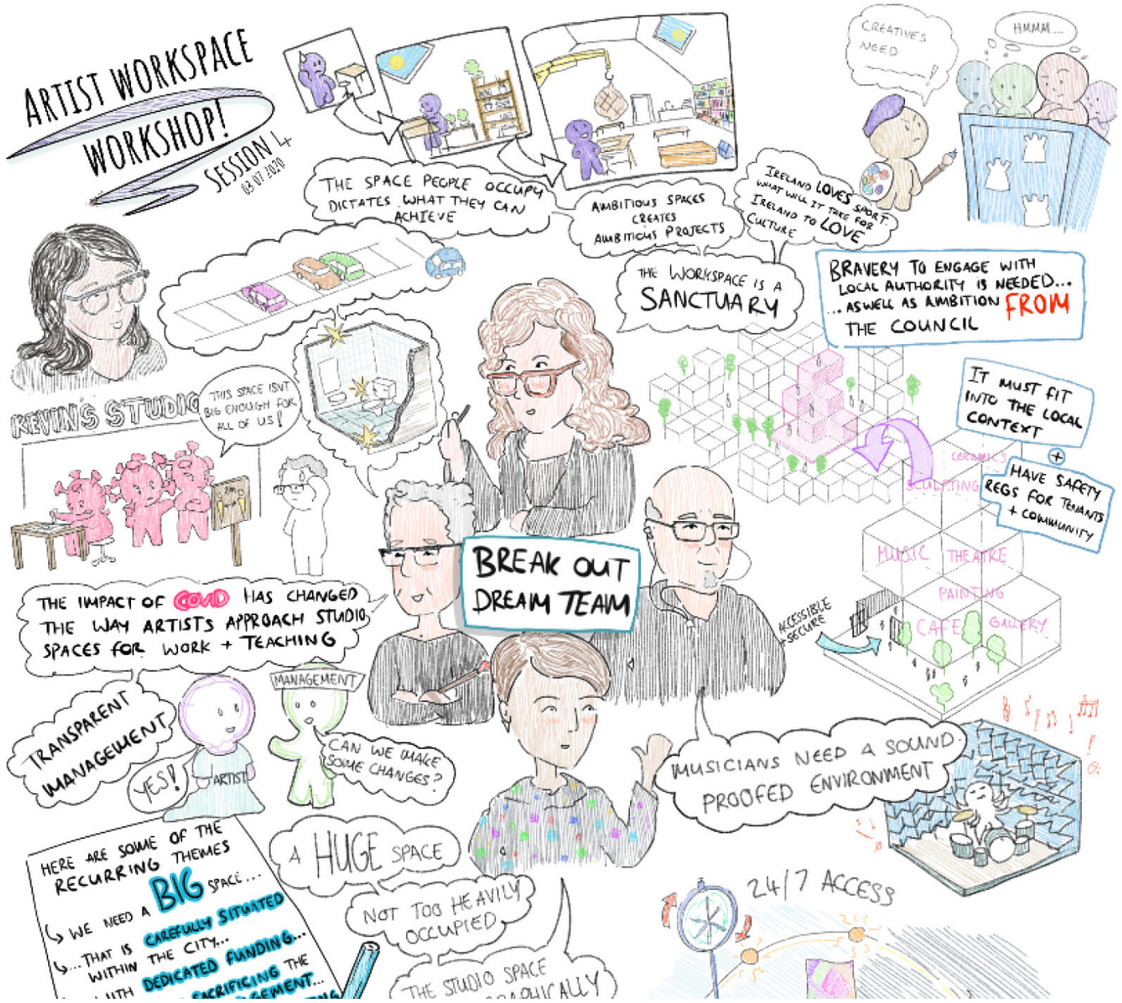
ANNEX 1 Visual Minutes from workshops

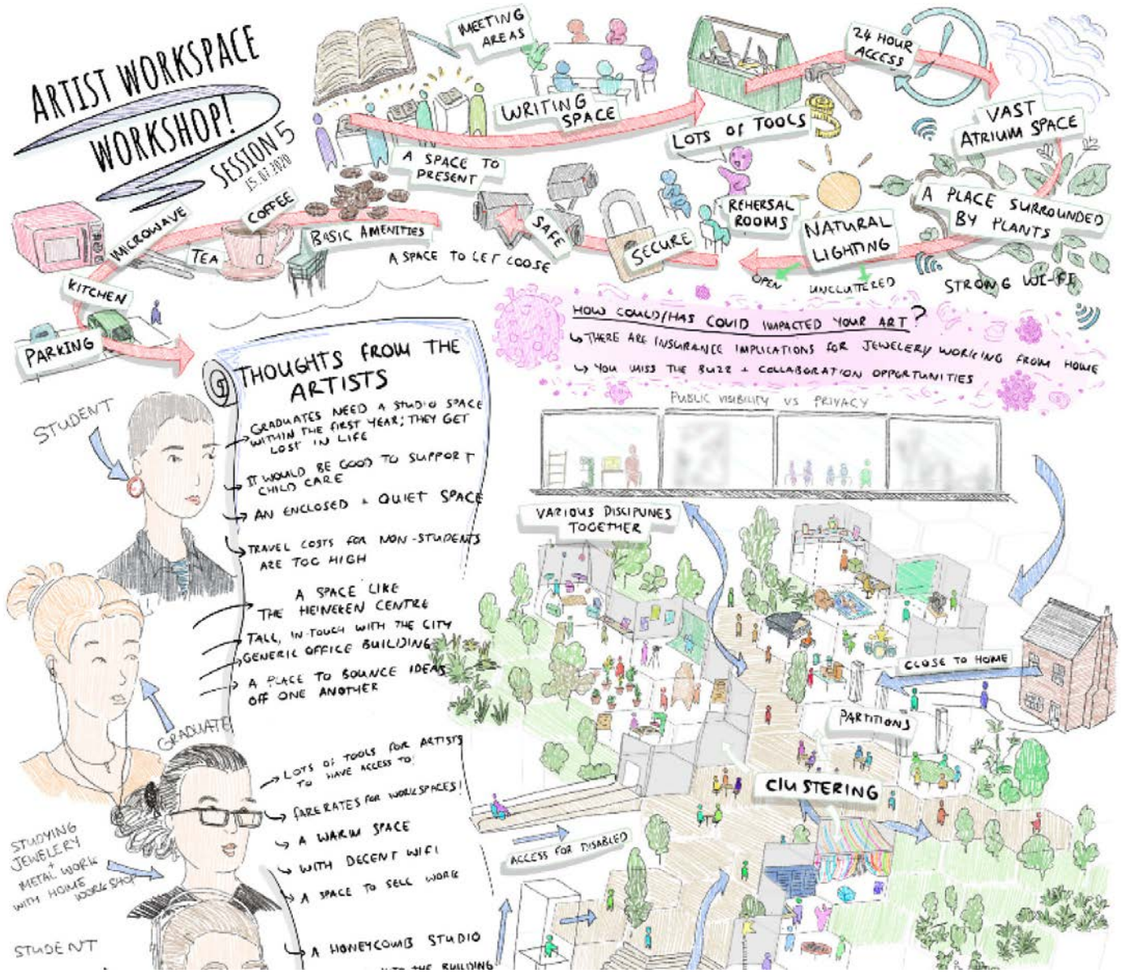


Visual minutes from the Artist Workspace workshops on 30th June 2020 and 1st July 2020.

Visual minutes from the the Artist Workspace workshop on 2nd July 2020.



Visual minutes from the the Artist Workspace workshop on 3rd July 2020.



Visual minutes from the the Artist Workspace 'Future User' workshop on 2nd July 2020.

Project Ireland 2040
Building Ireland's Future
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For more information or to set up a meeting please contact one of the team.

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